
Are You Helping the Tobacco Industry?

Facts for teachers, school counselors, principals, curriculum coordinators and youth program leaders

The tobacco industry's reach is far and wide. Tobacco companies invest billions in marketing their product and making themselves look responsible. In 2003, the major cigarette companies spent more than \$41.6 million per day to market their deadly product. One way that tobacco companies try to improve their public relations is through youth anti-smoking programs and parent education programs. Often these programs are promoted by sending free materials to teachers, guidance counselors, and principals in ways that make it difficult to recognize that they are tobacco industry sponsored.

Use of Tobacco Industry Youth Prevention Programs is *Not Recommended* in Classrooms, Schools, and Youth Organizations – Why?

The tobacco industry's own documents show that most youth smoking prevention programs it has supported are designed to promote industry political and marketing aims rather than to reduce smoking. Their interest is public image, not public health.

An analysis of tobacco industry youth programs appearing in the June 2002 issue of the American Journal of Public Health found no evidence that the industry's youth programs ever discussed nicotine addiction or identified other dangers of smoking. Rather, they often stressed that smoking is an "adult choice," a theme that one key internal Tobacco Institute document said with some hope "might prevent or delay further regulation of the tobacco industry." In Wisconsin the average age for regular youth tobacco use is 11 years old; this makes smoking a pediatric disease not an "adult choice."

From American Journal of Public Health: Jun 2002—**Tobacco Industry Youth Smoking Prevention Programs: Protecting the Industry and Hurting Tobacco Control**,
Anne Landman, Pamela M. Ling, and Stanton A. Glantz
Volume 92, pages 917-930

How Can You Recognize A Tobacco Industry Sponsored Program?

Check any free tobacco prevention materials that you receive for indications of the source of the product. Some of the companies have the materials sent out through public relations firms so it may not be easy to detect industry sponsorship. Go on-line and search the slogans and titles of the materials to see if they align with a company. Call your local tobacco control coalition if you need more help in identifying the credibility of youth anti-smoking materials and products. Local county coalitions can be found through the www.tobwis.org website.

Following are examples of some of the current programs supported by the tobacco industry that are *NOT RECOMMENDED*:

Philip Morris USA/Altria

Philip Morris USA/Altria sponsors youth anti-smoking commercials and a parent education web-based program. Parent brochures include “Peer pressure and smoking,” “Could your kid be smoking?” and the “Raising kids who don’t smoke” series. Some materials are available in Spanish.

RJ Reynolds

RJ Reynolds’ youth prevention program includes “Right Decisions, Right Now” which features study guides for educators, bumper stickers, posters & videos.

They funded the development and continue to support the Jaycees “Wake Up, Live Big, Be Smoke Free” curriculum which includes parent and potential sponsor information sheets, press materials, and a teachers’ guide with lessons.

Parent and grandparent brochures include—“Tobacco: Helping Your Child Say No”, “How To Talk To Your Kids About Not Smoking Even If You Do”, “Choices: Helping Your Child Make The Right Ones”, “Grandparents: How To Help Keep Your Grandchildren Smoke-Free.”

Brown & Williamson (Now owned by RJ Reynolds)

Youth prevention and parenting materials include “Sly’s Unwise Surprise (a book for children ages 4-8)”, “Generation Risk—A New Book for Parents,” and the brochure “Are Your Kids Sending You Smoke Signals?”

Lorillard

“Butt Out Now” and “Tobacco is Whacko If You’re A Teen” are Lorillard youth anti-smoking program materials that include a website, computer games, sweepstakes, cards, magazine and TV ads, and sports sponsorship.

They have developed a parent website which includes materials for the former “Take 10: Start Talking So Your Kids Don’t Smoke” Program, an instructional video, and an e-mail newsletter.

Be Suspicious of Freebies

The main purpose of the tobacco industry’s promotional items is to prevent the enactment of restrictions on marketing to youth. While these “give away” items may appear to be helpful at first glance, they are ineffective and in many instances, counter-productive in preventing youth tobacco use. The tobacco industry may send their free “tobacco prevention” materials to your school or organization. These materials may include book covers, posters, pens/pencils, as well as promotional flyers for the tobacco industry’s youth campaign. To view an example of Philip Morris book covers sent to schools across the nations, visit:

www.essentialaction.org/tobacco/aofm/0103/pics.html.

Tobacco Industry Strategies for Anti-Tobacco Programs

What Tobacco Industry Executives Say Behind the Scenes...

- Philip Morris:** “Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens...The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris.” *This statement was made by Dr. Caroling Levy, Senior Vice President of Youth Smoking Prevention at Philip Morris*
- RJ Reynolds** “Evidence is now available to indicate that the 14-18 year old group is an increasing segment of the smoking population. RJF-T must soon establish a successful new brand in this market if our position in the industry is to be maintained in the long term.”
- Brown & Williamson:** “Kool’s stake in the 16- to 25-year-old population segment is such that the value of this audience should be accurately weighted and reflected in current media programs...all magazines will be reviewed to see how efficiently they reach this group.”
- Lorillard Tobacco:** “[T]he base of our business is the high school student.”
- U.S. Tobacco:** “Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I’m saying.”

Find these quotes in tobacco industry documents at <http://tobaccodocuments.org/>

Tobacco Industry Documents and Youth Prevention Programs

The Tobacco Institute was a tobacco industry front group whose activity was brought to light during tobacco industry litigation. The following quotes from a Tobacco Institute discussion paper outline the actual purposes of the industry’s “youth smoking prevention” programs, one of which was helping the industry blunt public health arguments against tobacco use and portray public health workers as “extremists”:

“The youth program and its individual parts support The Institute’s objective of discouraging unfair and counterproductive federal, state and local restrictions on cigarette advertising, by:

- Providing on-going and persuasive evidence that the industry is actively discouraging youth smoking and independent verification that the industry’s efforts are valid.
- Reinforcing the belief that peer pressure—not advertising—is the cause of youth smoking.
- Seizing the political center and forcing the anti-smokers to an extreme (as happened when the antis attacked the industry at the time of the launch.)”

“The strategy is fairly simple:

1. Heavily promote the industry opposition to youth smoking.
2. Align the industry with a broader, more sophisticated view of the problem, i.e., parental inability to offset peer pressure.
3. Work with and through credible child welfare professionals and educators to tackle the "problem."
4. Bait anti-tobacco forces to criticize industry efforts. Focus media attention on antis' extremism. Anticipate and blunt antis' strongest points.
5. Establish the sense of a growing, well-accepted program by encouraging a proliferation of small, local projects, and appropriate co-ventures with other Tobacco Industry allies. Avoid dependency on any one organization.”

From Tobacco Institute-Jan.'91—Real Purpose of "Youth Prevention Programs"
Company/Source: Tobacco Institute Document Date: 29 Jan 1991 (est.)

Why Don't Tobacco Industry Tactics Reduce Youth Tobacco Use?

- **They portray smoking as an ‘adult activity.’**—Saying that it is ONLY for adults encourages youth to feel that to smoke is to be adult.
- **They use imagery that promotes tobacco use.**—Tobacco advertisements portray smokers as strong, attractive individuals, in control of their lives. This sends the message that if you smoke, you too can be strong and independent.
- **They promote rebellion through tobacco use.**—Many times, the tobacco industry will focus on punishments for underage tobacco use. This specifically targets rebellious youth and the desire of youth to be independent, making their own choices without adult intervention.

Where Can You Find More Information About Tobacco Industry Tactics?

- 1) FACT, Wisconsin's first statewide youth tobacco prevention movement was created by 300 youth from across Wisconsin at the June 2001 *Kickin' It! To Big Tobacco Bash*, to expose the tobacco industry's marketing practices. FACT is a youth-led campaign seeking to empower young people to make informed choices about tobacco by learning the facts about how the industry targets them. Check out their website at www.fightwithfact.com.
- 2) The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is "fighting to free America's youth from tobacco and to create a healthier environment. The campaign is one of the nation's largest non-governmental initiatives ever launched to protect children from tobacco addiction and exposure to secondhand smoke." Find more information at www.tobaccofreekids.org.
- 3) The Truth Campaign is the national empowerment movement focused on the tobacco industry. Its cutting edge advertising, geared for 16-24 year olds, has brought tobacco industry lies to mainstream media outlets. Truth can be found at www.thetruth.com.
- 4) Read Big Tobacco's darkest secrets straight from the source. This website has an extensive collection of industry documents that Big Tobacco wanted to keep secret. To unlock the key to the manipulations log onto the following site www.tobaccodocuments.org.

- 5) Find out the tobacco industry tactics in other countries besides the U.S. Global Partnerships for Tobacco Control was launched in 2000 to help support and strengthen grass roots tobacco control activities worldwide. The program pairs groups in the United States and Canada with groups in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, aiding them in the development of cooperative activities. More than 360 groups in over 100 countries and 40 U.S. states and territories are currently involved in the program. Participating groups include: tobacco control advocacy groups, youth networks and schools, hospitals and medical associations, local government agencies, consumer groups, and faith-based communities. Check out more at www.essentialaction.org/tobacco/index.html.

Where Can You Find Credible Sources for School-Based and School-Linked Anti-Tobacco Programs?

Tobacco industry supported educational materials are not credible sources for preventing youth tobacco use. There are many high-quality, credible sources that schools and other youth serving organizations can access for effective anti-tobacco programs...many of them free!

For a comprehensive listing of school-based resources, including classroom curriculum, cessation, school signage as well as specific resources targeting secondhand smoke, a new publication is available from the WI Department of Public Instruction entitled *Resources for School Tobacco Programs: A Selected List, 2005 Edition*. It is available for order by calling DPI at 608-266-8960.

The Tobacco Control Resource Center for WI also has a wide variety of resources available including materials that are free of charge or can be rented through their lending library. For more information, visit: www.tobwis.org. Check in particular the section for youth related professions.

If you need more information or help for your schools anti-tobacco programs contact the Department of Public Instruction or your local CESA, health department, or tobacco-free coalition.

The bottom line is that tobacco industry sources are not credible, do not promote successful prevention concepts, and schools should not be assisting them in broadening their influence among youth.